

The study is conducted to examine some of the important questions raised by both the religion side and the proponents of the Enlightenment movement. The purpose of this study is to interpret enlightenment in Western and Islamic context and to examine the impact of western enlightenment on contemporary Pakistani society in the light of Islamic teachings. The study was quantitative in nature. Survey was conducted to probe into the perceptions of the Pakistani people regarding impact of western enlightenment on various aspects of contemporary Pakistani society. Mix method research design was used. The sample of the study was 1000 people from four provincial headquarters of Pakistan including male and female from urban and rural areas of the provincial capitals. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. Two research instruments were developed by the researcher based on review of the related literature. First was a questionnaire named WEBI, Western Enlightenment Beliefs Inventory; second was a checklist named WEKAPC, Western Enlightenment Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Checklist. Data were collected in person and from some areas with the help of research assistants. Data collected about WEBI and WEKAPC were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS.

Results showed that most of the respondents were of the view that western enlightenment exerted significant influences on their thinking, lifestyles, and education, culture, media and social practices. Majority of the respondents thought that western enlightenment emphasized on tolerance, cultural harmony, equality, social justice and independent thinking. Gender-wise comparisons indicated that male respondents were more positive towards western enlightenment than the female respondents. It was recommended that Pakistani society needs to be made aware of the philosophy of western enlightenment and Islamic values which are characteristics of western enlightenment movement. Media may be used to sensitize the public that western enlightenment believes in tolerance, equality, social justice and impartiality. There is need to initiate interfaith dialogue to understand socio-cultural dynamics of a Muslim society and a western society, and further to remove hurdles for development of social and cultural harmony.